

Montana. The people of Eastern Idaho as affected by House bill No. 15 ... J. L. Campbell, of Eastern Idaho. Washington, D. C. May 12th, 1864. Washington, D. C. McGill & Witherow, printers and stereotypers, 366 E street [1864].

MONTANA.

THE PEOPLE OF EASTERN IDAHO AS AFFECTED BY HOUSE BILL NO. 15

The situation and wishes of the people of that portion of Idaho, embraced within the limits of Montana, cannot be better set forth than are expressed in the following preamble and resolutions, which were unanimously adopted at mass meetings held in the various settlements of that portion of the Territory last fall—1863. They are significant of the wishes of the people and of the absolute necessity of the passage of the Montana bill during this session of Congress.

Now, as there are many doubts as to its passage, I should not be true to myself nor should I be true to the people, whose wishes upon this subject I am familiar with—having been located for some time past in that country—were I to withhold any information, I may possess upon this important measure, from the members of Congress who are soon to determine whether or not we shall have a government in that far-off country.

The following are the preamble and resolutions referred to above:

Whereas, The Congress of the United States of America, at its last session, organized the Territory known as Idaho, by consolidating a portion of Washington Territory—laying west of the Rocky Mountains—with a portion of the territories of Dacotah and Nebraska—laying east of said mountains—two separate and distinct sections of country, whose settlements are isolated from each other several hundred miles by a great natural barrier, namely, the Rocky Mountains, with no interests in common, save those we all feel in the General Government; possessing no natural thorough-fares by which the sections may enjoy that social and political relation so indispensable to the prosperity of a people, organized under a territorial or State government, and

2

Whereas, The seat of government of said Territory must inevitably be located either at the western extremity of the Territory, or upon the eastern slope as the relative strength of the sections may determine, which in either case will render it very arduous and inconvenient if not wholly impossible for both sections to co-operate in the functions of its government. Divided as it is by a chain of snowy mountains which are impassable for from four to six months during each year: Therefore be it

" Resolved , That the citizens of the eastern portion of said Territory are disconnected from its western portion in all those interests which should bind together a free people organized under our territorial form of Government, (made so by the immutable walls of nature,) and for this reason, and in this sense only, they are independent of Western Idaho, and ought to be so recognized by the Congress of the United States, by the division of said Territory and the organization of a new Territory upon the eastern slope with the great natural divide as the dividing line; and further be it

" Resolved , That we, the citizens of said eastern portion of Idaho, will unite in asking Congress, at its next session—by petition or otherwise, as the case may be—to subdivide said Territory, and to organize a new Territory, as above contemplated."

Other reasons than those indicated above should be mentioned in this connection that are fraught with much interest, not only to the citizens of the locality, but also to the General Government. The tax bill now pending in Congress which will undoubtedly pass) provides for taxing the miners as follows:

"On gold or silver produced from quartz mines, from beds of rivers, from the earth, or in any other way or manner, a duty of five per centum."

Now, the practical question is, will the miners pay this revenue in Eastern Idaho, under the present state of things? From what I know of them personally—and I claim to have some little knowledge of their wishes and the circumstances under which they are placed, having visited many of the mining camps and settlements in the (to be) Montana section, and as miner, I unhesitatingly answer, yes.

Knowing, as I do, that the great mass of the people are loyal to the General Government, yet they will hope and expect to receive better protection in return, than they have as yet enjoyed under the organization of Idaho.

3

Notwithstanding the hardships and privations incident to the miner's avocation in this far off mountain region, they, with loyal hearts will cast their mite into the coffers of the nation for the purpose of sustaining it in this, its darkest hour, but they ask protection in their lives and in the pursuits of happiness and wealth. It may be said that they already have a government, namely: Idaho. *They in fact have no government.* To them the government of Idaho has proved a *farce*. They enjoy its protection about as much as the inhabitants of Mexico did the government of Spain.

It is now over one year since the organization of Idaho, during which time a reign of terror has pervaded the country east of the mountains. Men have been shot down like dogs and robbed of

their hard earned dust, in all quarters of the country, by a class of lawless desperadoes who have been attracted from all parts of the country to this rich and fertile, though unprotected, interior section for the sake of plunder.

Up to this time it has been unsafe for an honest man to be out of his cabin at night, or to travel about the country alone. The safety of the people has been in the Vigilance Committee, which has so recently re-enacted the early scenes of blood and swift retribution of California. Of the whole number executed in Eastern Idaho since its organization (which is twenty-eight) two only have been tried by civil law, and those not before courts established by or in virtue of any law of the United States or the Territory, but courts established by the miners for self protection.

In a financial point of view, the passage of this bill is of much importance to the Government? In this section of Idaho gold discoveries were made last year that have startled the country with their richness, and promise to rival, if not surpass the early El Dorado of the Pacific in the product of this precious metal.

Already these mines have produced millions of dollars, and their product the present season will be very large.

Should they yield five millions, which undoubtedly they will, the five per centum Government tax on that sum would amount to two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, deducting fifty thousand if you please to defray the expenses of the territorial government and for collecting the tax, and there remains two hundred thousand dollars to go into the treasury of the Government, which in all probability would not be realized unless law and order are established there, which can only effectually be done by establishing a new territory.

The census of last fall gives this (Montana) section of Idaho twelve thousand inhabitants, and by this time it unquestionably has from twenty to thirty thousand, and will, within a year, have a population of fifty thousand, with a product of gold that will astonish the country, and surpass any mining section on the continent; and the above estimated yield may with safety be doubled.

In view of all the facts connected with this people and Territory, I respectfully submit—inasmuch as their safety and prosperity are at stake—the expediency of the establishment of a government during the present session of Congress.

Respectfully, J. L. CAMPBELL, *Of Eastern Idaho.*

Washington, D. C., *May 12 th* , 1864.

McGill & Witherow, Printers and Stereotypers, 366 E street, Washington, D. C.

204/50